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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/465,506	12/16/1999	LANCE LUNDBERG	ICON-102	8959
909	7590	06/04/2004	EXAMINER	
PILLSBURY WINTHROP, LLP				PATEL, JAGDISH
P.O. BOX 10500				
MCLEAN, VA 22102				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
		3624		

DATE MAILED: 06/04/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/465,506	LUNDBERG ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	JAGDISH PATEL	3624

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 March 2004.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-40 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-40 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. This communication is in response to amendment filed 3/11/04.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

2. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 3/11/04 has been entered.

Response to Amendment/Remarks

3. claims 1-40 have been amended per request. Rejections of claims 1-40 under 35 USC 103 have been withdrawn in response to the applicant's persuasive arguments. It is however, noted that the amended claims are defective in regard to 35 U.S.C. 101 and 35 U.S.C. 112 (second) as explained in the following paragraphs.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

4. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

5. Claims 1-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. (claims 1-17 are not within technological arts)

As an initial matter, the United States Constitution under Art. I, §8, cl. 8 gave Congress the power to "[p]romote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries". In carrying out this power, Congress authorized under 35 U.S.C. §101 a grant of a patent to "[w]hoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition or matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof." Therefore, a fundamental premise is that a patent is a statutorily created vehicle for Congress to confer an exclusive right to the inventors for "inventions" that promote the progress of "science and the useful arts". The phrase "technological arts" has been created and used by the courts to offer another view of the term "useful arts". See *In re Musgrave*, 167 USPQ (BNA) 280 (CCPA 1970). Hence, the first test of whether an invention is eligible for a patent is to determine if the invention is within the "technological arts".

Further, despite the express language of §101, several judicially created exceptions have been established to exclude certain subject matter as being patentable subject matter covered by §101. These exceptions include

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"laws of nature", "natural phenomena", and "abstract ideas". See *Diamond v. Diehr*, 450, U.S. 175, 185, 209 USPQ (BNA) 1, 7 (1981). However, courts have found that even if an invention incorporates abstract ideas, such as mathematical algorithms, the invention may nevertheless be statutory subject matter if the invention as a whole produces a "useful, concrete and tangible result." See *State Street Bank & Trust Co. v. Signature Financial Group, Inc.* 149 F.3d 1368, 1973, 47 USPQ2d (BNA) 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1998).

This "two prong" test was evident when the Court of Customs and Patent Appeals (CCPA) decided an appeal from the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences (BPAI). See *In re Toma*, 197 USPQ (BNA) 852 (CCPA 1978). In *Toma*, the court held that the recited mathematical algorithm did not render the claim as a whole non-statutory using the Freeman-Walter-Abele test as applied to *Gottschalk v. Benson*, 409 U.S. 63, 175 USPQ (BNA) 673 (1972). Additionally, the court decided separately on the issue of the "technological arts". The court developed a "technological arts" analysis:

The "technological" or "useful" arts inquiry must focus on whether the claimed subject matter...is statutory, not on whether the product of the claimed subject matter...is statutory, not on whether the prior art which the claimed subject matter purports to replace...is statutory, and not on whether the claimed subject matter is presently perceived to be an improvement over the prior art, e.g., whether it "enhances" the operation of a machine. *In re Toma* at 857.

In *Toma*, the claimed invention was a computer program for translating a source human language (e.g., Russian) into a target human language (e.g.,

English). The court found that the claimed computer implemented process was within the "technological art" because the claimed invention was an operation being performed by a computer within a computer.

The decision in *State Street Bank & Trust Co. v. Signature Financial Group, Inc.* never addressed this prong of the test. In *State Street Bank & Trust Co.*, the court found that the "mathematical exception" using the Freeman-Walter-Abele test has little, if any, application to determining the presence of statutory subject matter but rather, statutory subject matter should be based on whether the operation produces a "useful, concrete and tangible result". See *State Street Bank & Trust Co.* at 1374. Furthermore, the court found that there was no "business method exception" since the court decisions that purported to create such exceptions were based on novelty or lack of enablement issues and not on statutory grounds. Therefore, the court held that "[w]hether the patent's claims are too broad to be patentable is not to be judged under §101, but rather under §§102, 103 and 112." See *State Street Bank & Trust Co.* at 1377. Both of these analysis goes towards whether the claimed invention is non-statutory because of the presence of an abstract idea. Indeed, *State Street* abolished the Freeman-Walter-Abele test used in *Toma*. However, *State Street* never addressed the second part of the analysis, i.e., the "technological arts" test established in *Toma* because the invention in *State Street* (i.e., a computerized system for determining the year-end income, expense, and capital gain or loss for the portfolio) was already determined to be within the technological arts under the *Toma* test. This dichotomy has been recently acknowledged by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences (BPAI) in affirming a §101 rejection finding the claimed

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invention to be non-statutory. See *Ex parte Bowman*, 61 USPQ2d (BNA) 1669 (BdPatApp&Int 2001).

In the present application, Claims 1-17 have no connection to the technological arts. None of the steps indicate any connection to a computer or technology. As an example, steps a) - d) are explicitly recited as being performed by a trading company (i.e. a representative or an employee of the TC). Furthermore, absence of any technological implement recited in the claim leads to interpretation that these steps and therefore the entire claimed invention could be performed manually. Therefore, the claims are not within technological arts and hence directed towards non-statutory subject matter. To overcome this rejection the Examiner recommends that Applicant amend the claims to better clarify which of the steps are being performed within the technological arts, such as the process of the method performed based on application of a computer processor / communication network etc. All other claims could be similarly amended to include a computer and/or a communication network as appropriate within the scope of the disclosure.

Claims 18-29 are rejected because **the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.**

Claim 18 the disclosed invention is inoperative and therefore lacks utility.

Claim 18 merely recites elements of an apparatus or a system without showing any functionality of and interrelationship among the recited elements and therefore is rendered inoperative lacking any utility. As an example, the computer processor is not functionally coupled to the first through fifth

means and the storage means in a manner which would render the functionality of the claimed system as defined in the preamble.

Dependent claims 19-29 also inherit this deficiency.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

6. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

7. Claims 1-5 and 18-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1 contains the following deficiencies which it and the dependent claims indefinite. Appropriate corrections are required.

Step a) "maintaining an inventory data base" does not correlate to any other step including step d). Each of the steps b) - d) can be performed without an inventory data base.

Steps b) fails to clearly define the basis upon which "a cash/trade-credit blend" is determined. One of ordinary skill in the art would not carry out this step without recitation of appropriate relationship of the "cash/trade-

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credit blend" to the properties of the "capital seeking company (CSC)" which is financed.

Step c) recites that the TC receives securities from the CSC in exchange for the trade-credit portion of the cash/trade-credit blend. However, the claim fails to recite any communication of the cash/trade-credit blend from the TC to the CSC. This comment also applies to step d).

Step d) recites limitation "in exchange for a proportional quantity of products". This limitation by itself renders the claim indefinite because there is no standard provided for determination of the exchange and there is no relationship provided that correlates the securities received from the CSC and "a portion of the cash/trade-credit blend".

Claim 2 recites "receiving deficient assets". Is it meant to read "information pertaining to the deficient assets" or the actual deficient assets? In either case the claim does not address the question of any relationship between the deficient assets and the trade credits transmitted to the deficient asset CSC.

Dependent claims 3-5 inherit the deficiencies of the parent claim.

Claims 18-40 contain the following defects which render the claims indefinite. Exemplary analysis provided for claim 18.

As an example, claim 18, recites limitation (c) "..inventory component desired by the company...". This limitation is unclear because the preamble refers to "a trading company" and "a capital seeking company" and the limitation fails to specify which company is referred to.

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Furthermore, the pre-amble refers to the claimed system as a data processing system for supporting "security-trade" financing by a trading company for ..a capital seeking company having deficient assets. However, the elements of the claimed data processing system (1) does not identify which elements have any relationship to these companies and (2) does not identify any element related to the "security-trade financing".

The aforementioned mentioned deficiency is generic to claims 18-40.

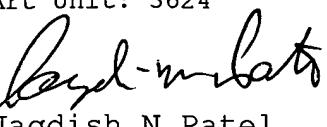
Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JAGDISH PATEL whose telephone number is (703)308-7837. The examiner can normally be reached on 800AM-600PM M-Th.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vincent Millin can be reached on (703)308-1065. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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Jagdish N Patel
Primary Examiner, AU 3624